



## **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

Region One  
490 North Meridian Rd.  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
(406) 752-5501  
FAX: 406-257-0349  
Ref:DV135-03  
July 10, 2003

TO: Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Helena, 59620-1704  
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Planning, Prevention & Assistance, PO Box 200901, Helena, 59620-0901  
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Permitting Compliance, PO Box 200901, Helena, 59620-0901  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Director's Office, Reg Peterson; Parks Division, Walt Timmerman, Allan Kuser; Design & Construction, Paul Valle; & Legal Unit, Brandi Fisher.  
Montana Historical Society, SHPO, 225 North Roberts, Veteran's Memorial Building, Helena, 59620-1201  
Montana State Library, 1515 East Sixth Ave., Helena, 59620-1800  
Jim Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, PO Box 1184, Helena, 59624  
George Ochenski, PO Box 689, Helena, 59624  
Wayne Hirst, Montana State Parks Foundation, PO Box 728, Libby, 59923  
Montana State Parks Association, PO Box 699, Billings, 59103  
Rep. Bernie Olson, 161 Lakeside Blvd., Lakeside, 59922-9723  
Sen. Bob Keenan, Box 697, Bigfork, 59911-0697  
Flathead County Commissioners, 800 S Main Street, Kalispell, 59901  
Flathead County Library, 247 First Avenue E, Kalispell, 59901

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Fish, Wildlife & Parks has completed an environmental assessment for the purpose of providing site protection at Old Steel Bridge FAS. The project would include replacing the vault toilet, barrier work, and installation of a volunteer host pad.

There were no changes to the draft EA; therefore, the draft becomes the final EA. A copy of the decision document is enclosed. The final Environmental Assessment may be viewed at or obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region One, 490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901. Please direct questions or comments to Marty Watkins, Regional Parks Manager, 490 North Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901, or e-mail to [mawatkins@state.mt.us](mailto:mawatkins@state.mt.us).

Sincerely,

Daniel P. Vincent  
Regional Supervisor

/ni  
Enclosure

c: Linda de Yong  
Roy Albertus

# Old Steel Bridge FAS Site Protection Project

## MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

### PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

**1. Type of Proposed State Action:**

The proposed action is to complete a site protection project on both sides of the river at Old Steel Bridge. These sites used to be known as Kiwanis Lane and Old Steel Bridge fishing access sites, but have been combined into one site known as Old Steel Bridge. The project would consist of installing new barrier rock and replacing some of the existing guardrail on the east side of the river with barrier rock or other appropriate barriers. In addition, this project would replace the existing vault toilet on the west side of the river with a new vault toilet, and install a volunteer host pad so FWP could seek a volunteer to live on site and perform maintenance and security duties. Finally, new gates would be installed on the west side of the river to control after-hours use that is currently occurring.

**2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** MCA 23-1-101

**3. Name of Project:** Old Steel Bridge Site Protection Project

**4. Name, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency):**

**5. If Applicable:**

**Estimated Construction/Commencement Date:**

**Estimated Completion Date:**

**Current Status of Project Design (% complete):**

**6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range, and township):**

Portions of Sections 3 and 10, T28N, R21W. Please see attached map in Appendix A.

**7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

	Acre		Acres
(a) Developed:	_____	(d) Floodplain .....	_____
industrial .....	_____	(e) Productive:	
		irrigated cropland .	_____
(b) Open	_____	dry cropland .....	_____
		forestry .....	_____
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas ...	128	rangeland .....	_____
		other .....	_____

8. **Map/Site Plan: Attach an original 8½" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.**

See Appendix A.

9. **Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project, Including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action:**

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide site protection at Old Steel Bridge FAS. FWP acquired 10 acres from the Kalispell Kiwanis Club in 1973. An additional 100 acres was acquired in 1980. This land abutted the 10 acres acquired from the Kiwanis. In 1964 FWP acquired 11.59 acres on the east side of the river.

In 1974 the 10-acre parcel acquired from the Kiwanis Club (located on the west side of the river) was developed, with the installation of a day-use loop road, a vault latrine, and a well. Tables, stoves, and garbage cans were also installed at that time – the boat ramp was already in place. In 1982 the east side of the river was developed, with a loop road and vault latrine. In 1984 a parking lot was put into the portion of land on the west side of the river and the west side of the Old Steel Bridge. From initial installation, vandalism and undesirable use has been problematic. In 1989 FWP installed more substantial barriers, fencing, and security gates. Tables and grills were not replaced as they were burned, destroyed, or stolen. In addition, off-road vehicle use became a major issue in the 1990s; and rutting, due to off-road use, and subsequent erosion caused major impacts to fragile riparian areas. In addition, other uses such as drinking and illegal drug use became common, and the area began to be used by vagrants, who live in the brush. The area became unsafe for citizens to use after dark. At one point in the early 1990s, the Flathead County Sheriff notified FWP that if FWP did not get the site “under control,” the Sheriff would close the site.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, FWP increased heavy barrier work, installed gates, increased patrols, and attempted to gain site control. Adjacent neighbors volunteered to close the gate on the east side of the river nightly, reducing the activities occurring on that side of the river. At this time, the off-road vehicle use has abated, but other illicit uses continue. The volunteers who shut the gates in the past have stopped volunteering this service, and FWP is seeking, through this project, an alternative management plan.

The purpose of this project is twofold: 1) Make the east side of the river more aesthetically appealing by replacing the current guard rail barrier work with some other type of barrier, such as rock, or post and cable; and 2) on the west side of the river, replace the vault toilet, complete barrier and gate work, remove the day-use loop road and replace it with two parking areas, and install a volunteer host pad (to accommodate a house trailer) on FWP property on the west side of the Old Steel Bridge Road and the river. The volunteer host would have a free place to park their mobile home or large recreational vehicle in exchange for 20 hours of volunteer work per week, opening the gates in the morning and closing them at night, doing some limited maintenance, and notifying FWP or the Flathead County Sheriff's Department when illicit activities are occurring. Volunteer hosts have been used with great success at Lone Pine State Park, which experienced many of the same types of problems as currently occur at Old Steel Bridge, until an on-site host could be provided.

With the removal of the current bridge and new bridge construction slated for 2007, this project would be coordinated with MDOT to ensure permanent facilities are placed in areas that will be coordinated with the new layout demanded by the relocation of the bridge. The new vault toilet and the anticipated road work will be delayed until the bridge project is completed to avoid conflicting projects and in anticipation of the road realignments to meet the new bridge alignment.

Repair or relocation of the existing boat ramp is not anticipated in this project due to the bridge realignment. It is anticipated that the realignment of the bridge and the removal of the abutments of the old bridge will cause the gravel bar that has built in front of the existing boat ramp to wash downriver. If this does not occur within three years of the installation of the new bridge, a new boat ramp will be built downriver as part of the mitigation for placement of the new bridge on FWP property.

**10. Listing of Any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency That Has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**

**(a) Permits:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
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**(b) Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
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**(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
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**10. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Department of Transportation  
Department of Environmental Quality  
County Sanitation Department  
County Planning

## PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### 1. Evaluation of the impacts of the proposed action, including secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical and human environment.

#### A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
>a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X			1b
>c. Destruction, covering, or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition, or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream, or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other (list)						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1b. With the intent of this project being the control of off-road vehicle use and a reduction in vandalism and illicit use, the project will reduce soil instability, siltation, and loss of vegetation if it is successful. Some soil compaction will occur where the host pad is located in order to accommodate a mobile home or large recreational vehicle, parking, a storage building, and possibly a carport in the future.

- ⚙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. <u>AIR</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT⚙				Can Impact Be Mitigated⚙	Comment Index
	Unknown⚙	None	Minor⚙	Potentially Significant		
➤a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13c.)			x			2a
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
♦e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)		X				
f. Other						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2a. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions will be created by equipment during construction of the gravel host pad, barrier work, and latrine installation. Gravel surface on the host pad and parking area, combined with low traffic speeds in that area, will limit dust.



Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.



Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).



Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.



Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality, including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen, or turbidity?		X				3a
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water-related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				3f
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
♦♦l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		X				3l
♦m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		X				
n. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3a: Anticipated construction will be away from the river and is not anticipated to cause siltation or runoff. FWP is committed to best management practices during site construction, including siltation barriers.

3f and 3l: Portions of Old Steel Bridge FAS are within the 100-year floodplain. Location of the host pad and associated septic system will meet county standards and will be done with proper permitting. If an engineered system is required, that will be provided.

- ⚙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- ♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

4. <u>VEGETATION</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity, or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X			4a
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				4e
♦♦f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				4f
g. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a: Some native plants will be impacted by the installation of the host pad, but the area impacted will be limited and will have no significant impact on the plant community as a whole. Reduction of off-road vehicle use will improve the plant communities in other areas of the site. On the whole, there will be a net gain in vegetated area.

4e: Noxious weeds currently exist on site at Old Steel Bridge. This land is incorporated into the Region One Noxious Weed Management Program, and mechanical, chemical, and biological treatment of weeds will continue. It is not anticipated that this action will increase the number or variety of noxious weeds currently on site.

4f: Portions of the Old Steel Bridge FAS are wetlands and riparian areas. Most of the activities of this proposal would be on lands already developed for recreation, with exception being the location of the host pad. This would be located outside of wetland areas, and care will be taken to meet county septic requirement.



Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.



Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).



Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.



Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.



5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest, or other human activity)?		X				5g
♦♦h. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		X				
♦i. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		X				
j. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

5g: The volunteer host will be required to follow Department regulation if they have pets. All pets are required to be kept on leash in state parks and fishing access sites, so stress on wildlife populations in this area should be minimal.

- ⚙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- ♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			6a
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a: The addition of another residence in this area will increase existing noise levels; however, the adjacent areas are already heavily developed for housing, both individual housing and trailer courts, so impacts would be minimal.

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- ⚙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a.)		X				
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u>	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?			x			9b
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9b. One of the primary objectives of the current project is to control illicit behavior that historically occurs on this site. The control of such behavior and uses would serve to benefit the social structure of the surrounding community.

- ⚙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				10a
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electrical power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?			X			10d
>e. Define projected revenue sources.						
>f. Define projected maintenance costs.						
g. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a and 10d: Since the volunteer host pad will be developed in an area where adjacent areas are already heavily developed for housing, it is not anticipated that services will have to be increased, with exception of government services provided by FWP to provide housing for the host. The host pad will use electricity and propane, but the increase is minor.

- ⚙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista, or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			X			11a
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?			X			11b
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach tourism report.)			X			11c
d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails, or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		X				
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11a and 11b: The host pad will be located in an area that is currently undeveloped, and will be visible from the road and the rest of the fishing access site. This will have minor impact on the aesthetic character of the area; however, the development will not be in the primary viewshed towards the water from the public use area, but away from the river and on the other side of the road from the primary use area.

11c: Recreation and tourism opportunities should be improved with the Old Steel Bridge FAS becoming more family friendly and more inviting for the general public.

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure, or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12a.)		X				
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- ⚙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE  Will the proposed action, considered as a whole,:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources, which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard, or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
♦f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		X				
♦♦g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):



Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.



Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).



Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.



Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)**

- 1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no-action alternative) to the proposed action, whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider, and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

Given the bridge realignment is going to occur (public comment has already been received and the environmental assessment is done), some impacts are going to occur to this site with or without this proposed action. The current vault toilet on the west side of the river is located within the toe slope of the new bridge alignment and will have to be removed. The boat ramp should become usable again with the washing away of the gravel bar caused by the bridge abutments, which are scheduled to be removed.

Two alternatives present themselves for this project:

1. No action: Do not replace the guardrail barriers on the east side of the river, do not remove the day-use loop road, and do not provide barriers, gates, and a host pad on the west side of the river. Illicit activities will continue, and vandalism and off-road vehicle use will continue. Maintenance and vandalism repair will continue at a high cost due to lack of site control.
2. Preferred Alternative: Replace the guardrail barriers on the east side of the river to make that area more aesthetically pleasing, reclaim the day-use loop road on the west side of the river and provide two parking areas instead, provide barrier work and gates to control off road vehicle use, and provide a host pad to reduce illicit activities.

- 2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

All permits will be gained for any septic system placement, and flood plain management will be considered. All county planning regulations will be followed.

## **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

1b. With the intent of this project being the control of off-road vehicle use and a reduction in vandalism and illicit use, the project will reduce soil instability, siltation, and loss of vegetation if it is successful. Some soil compaction will occur where the host pad is located in order to accommodate a mobile home or large recreational vehicle, parking, a storage building, and possibly a carport in the future.

2a. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions will be created by equipment during construction of the gravel host pad, barrier work, and latrine installation. Gravel surface on the host pad and parking area, combined with low traffic speeds in that area, will limit dust.

3a: Anticipated construction will be away from the river and is not anticipated to cause siltation or runoff. FWP is committed to best management practices during site construction, including siltation barriers.

3f and 3l: Portions of Old Steel Bridge FAS are within the 100-year floodplain. Location of the host pad and associated septic system will meet county standards and will be done with proper permitting. If an engineered system is required, that will be provided.

4a: Some native plants will be impacted by the installation of the host pad, but the area impacted will be limited and will have no significant impact on the plant community as a whole. Reduction of off-road vehicle use will improve the plant communities in other areas of the site. On the whole, there will be a net gain in vegetated area.

4e: Noxious weeds currently exist on site at Old Steel Bridge. This land is incorporated into the Region One Noxious Weed Management Program, and mechanical, chemical, and biological treatment of weeds will continue. It is not anticipated that this action will increase the number or variety of noxious weeds currently on site.

4f: Portions of the Old Steel Bridge FAS are wetlands and riparian areas. Most of the activities of this proposal would be on lands already developed for recreation, with exception being the location of the host pad. This would be located outside of wetland areas, and care will be taken to meet county septic requirement.

5g: The volunteer host will be required to follow Department regulation if they have pets. All pets are required to be kept on leash in state parks and fishing access sites, so stress on wildlife populations in this area should be minimal.

6a: The addition of another residence in this area will increase existing noise levels; however, the adjacent areas are already heavily developed for housing, both individual housing and trailer courts, so impacts would be minimal.

9b. One of the primary objectives of the current project is to control illicit behavior that historically occurs on this site. The control of such behavior and uses would serve to benefit the social structure of the surrounding community.

10a and 10d: Since the volunteer host pad will be developed in an area where adjacent areas are already heavily developed for housing, it is not anticipated that services will have to be increased, with exception of government services provided by FWP to provide housing for the host. The host pad will use electricity and propane, but the increase is minor.

11a and 11b: The host pad will be located in an area that is currently undeveloped, and will be visible from the road and the rest of the fishing access site. This will have minor impact on the aesthetic character of the area; however, the development will not be in the primary viewshed towards the water from the public use area, but away from the river and on the other side of the road from the primary use area.

11c: Recreation and tourism opportunities should be improved with the Old Steel Bridge FAS becoming more family friendly and more inviting for the general public.



## **PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

- 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:**

Because impacts from this project are deemed to be minor, an environmental assessment is considered to be the appropriate level of analysis for this project.

- 2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project, if any; and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?**

This project will be advertised through legal advertisements, notification of adjacent neighbors via letter, and through news releases placed in the local paper. A public meeting will be held in Kalispell, Thursday, June 26, 2003, and a 30-day public comment period will be held before a decision on this project is reached.

- 3. Duration of comment period, if any:** Thirty days, from June 2 through July 2, 2003.
- 4. Name, title, address, and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:**

Marty Watkins, Regional Park Manager  
Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
490 N. Meridian Road  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
(406) 751-4573  
mawatkins@state.mt.us